SATURDAY, MAY 31, 2025 SERVING NILES, BUCHANAN AND EDWARDSBURG

Niles Daily Star

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Buchanan approves DDA board members

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

BUCHANAN — The conditions on the ground might not be good right now in downtown Buchanan with the $19 million infrastructure project in full swing, but local officials are confident the city will come back stronger than ever once the current construction work is done later this year.

Buchanan City Commissioners took action Tuesday night on two items that should help make the downtown revitalization become a reality. Commissioners approved the members of the newly reconstituted Downtown Development Authority as well as an economic incentive grant for a new downtown coffee shop/restaurant.

City Commissioners voted to bring back the DDA at their commission meeting earlier this month after holding a public hearing. The DDA had been disbanded in 2020 after differences arose between DDA members and city officials. Commissioners began talking about restoring the DDA last fall and have been working since then to do just that.

The city commission is taking the action now to restore the DDA and appoint members in order for the DDA to once again start capturing taxes from new development under its tax increment financing authority.

People appointed to the DDA Tuesday were Thistledown & Row general manager Shawn Renfro, real estate agent Joseph Williams, McCollum Livery boutique hotel developer Michael Reed, Precept Partners owner Jeffery Antisdel, Stranger Wine Company owner Sidney Finan, real estate agent Julie Capron, Cannavista Wellness owner Richard Paniagua, Buchanan

See BOARD, Page A6

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Two arrested in Niles Township apartment standoff

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES CHARTER TOWNSHIP — A Niles man and a Dowagiac man were arrested late Monday night after barricading themselves inside an apartment in Niles Township, according to the Berrien County Sheriff's Office.

At approximately 11:18 p.m. Monday, the BCSO responded to Berrien Woods Apartments, 1900 E. Main St. Niles, for a report of gun shots fired. A BCSO Deputy arrived at the apartment complex near 910 Woodsedge Dr. and observed a disturbance outside involving several subjects. The deputy approached the subjects and witnessed a male carrying a pistol. The subjects all fled on foot away from the deputy as he gave chase. The deputy chased the man with a gun along with several other subjects and they entered an apartment. The subjects

refused to come to the apartment door or communicate with the deputy. Additional police units were called to the scene and surrounded the apartment. Police had the neighboring apartments evacuated, treating the scene as a barricaded gunman.

See STANDOFF, Page A6

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Niles hosts 2025 Memorial Day Parade

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — A string of floats, vehicles and city officials paraded down Main Street Monday morning in honor of the men and women who had given their lives in service to the country.

The City of Niles and the American Legion Post 26 hosted its annual Memorial Day ceremony and parade Monday. The parade featured floats and guests including the Niles and Brandywine High School bands, the Miss Niles Scholarship Pageant, the City of Niles Fire Department and more.

The parade began on 2nd Street in front of City Hall before heading north on Sycamore St., south on 3rd Street, then east on Main Street to Oak, east on Oak to East Main, and south on East Main to Silverbrook Cemetery. Following the parade, many in attendance made their way to the cemetery for a ceremony honoring the local men and women who passed away after serving their country.

PHOTOS BY MAXWELL HARDEN, TANYA HAGEN AND KRISTIN BIVENS

A day 13 years in the making arrived for four area schools this past week as Brandywine, Buchanan, Edwardsburg and Niles Cedar Lane/WAY Program hosted ceremonies for the Class of 2025. STORIES INSIDE

OBITUARIES

Geraldine Ignowski
Clyde Corbit
Leon P. Page
Larry Ashley Reihl
Maria Castillo
Anthony Lewis Henry
William Earl Camelet
Harold Earl DeMass
Sherry Lynn Mayer
Joanne Hall
Clyde Kenneth Corbit
Jo Ann Horvath
Bruce Robert Lietzke
Agnes Brumfield
Joseph Russell Thompson Sr
Judy O'Brien
Brady F. Chaffee
Mary Jane Wood Zabinski

A7

Dowagiac baseball falls to Berrien Springs

B1

FRANKLY

TIPS, QUIPS, AND BLIPS

What is Frankly? It is where readers sound off on issues of the day. Have a tip, quip or blip? Call or text Frankly at 219-455-2349 or email rich.cains@leaderpub.com

The Federal Government awards a January 6 rioter's family $5 million dollars for her bad decisions and criminal behavior. What's next, rewarding BLM looters? That's your hard earned tax dollars at work.

Trump needs to lose the bright red campaigning slogan hat that he wears at every event...particularly official presentations where it is definitely NOT appropriate!

Actual Memorial Day Post from our US President: "HAPPY MEMORIAL DAY TO ALL, INCLUDING THE SCUM THAT SPENT THE LAST FOUR YEARS TRYING TO DESTROY OUR COUNTRY THROUGH WARPED RADICAL LEFT MINDS," President Donald Trump

Closing the US border to criminals has helped secure our cities and towns. Get over it.

Nuclear Energy is clean energy. It generates so much power by making steam, yes, the same way burning coal does. Proper storage is important. If you want to reduce our carbon footprint and demand for fossil fuel, this is the way to go.

Love each other!

Winter and road construction seem to be the two seasons in Michigan.

There are too many cannabis stores in our area. But, at least vacant buildings are being rehabbed and utilized. Construction jobs are being created and the local government is receiving funds.

Time to clean up those yards. At least throw some wildflower seeds on that old couch sitting on the front lawn.

WEATHER

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
Sunny	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Sunny	50% Chance of Storms	60% Chance of Rain
65° 46°	70° 50°	85° 62°	88° 70°	86° 66°	80° 62°

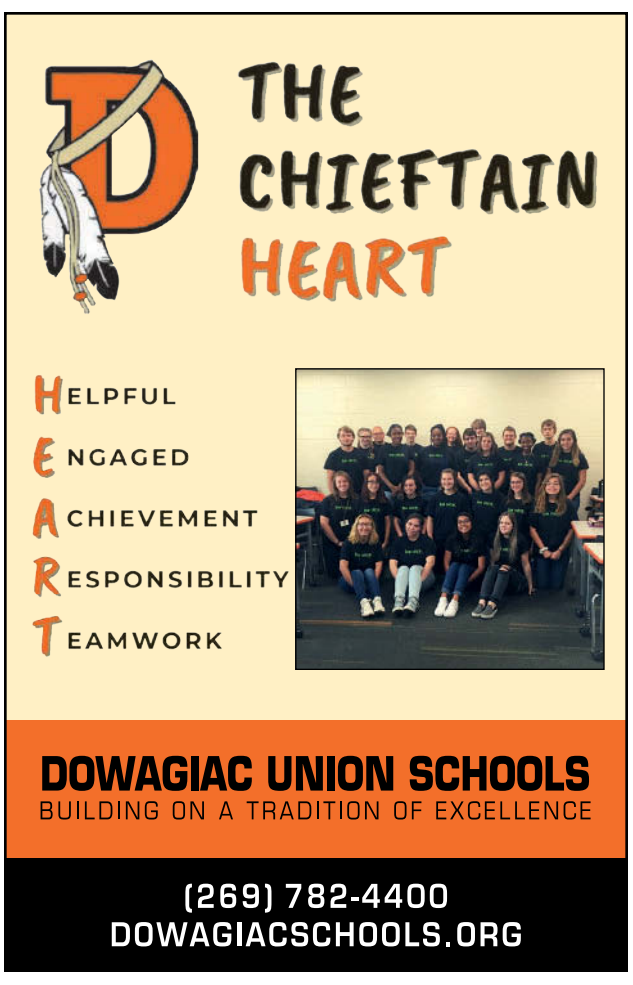
POKAGON BAND HOSTS ANNUAL GGATÉNMAMEN GDANKOBTHEGNANÊK POW WOW

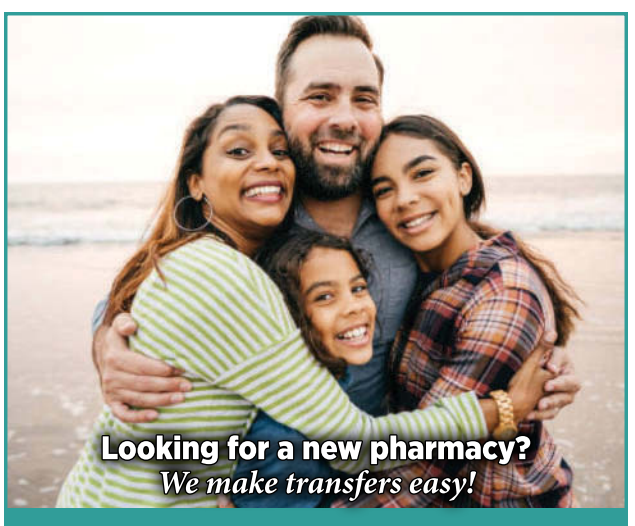
By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

POKAGON TOWNSHIP — The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians hosted its annual Ggaténmamen Gdankobthegnanêk Pow Wow Saturday and Sunday at the Pokagon Band's Rodger Lake campus, 58620 Sink Road.

A traditional pow wow, Ggaténmamen Gdankobthegnanêk, which translates to "we are honoring the ones we're tied to through generations," featured song and dance in a way that allowed Potawatomi to celebrate their culture and share it with the community. Vendors were on hand selling native artwork, jewelry and food.

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS





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Buchanan graduates Class of 2025

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

BUCHANAN — Under the setting sun, the Buchanan community packed Memorial Field stands Thursday evening to see the Class of 2025 together for one last time.

Decked out in their caps, gowns, stoles, sashes and stylish cap art, 117 graduating seniors marched onto the track to the tune of "Pomp and Circumstance" before listening to statements from Superintendent Patricia Robinson and Principal Brian Pruett.

"When you leave here today, you will be a graduate of Buchanan High School," Robinson said. "The future is yours, shape it, and I do not doubt that you will go on to achieve remarkable things, embrace the journey, stay true to yourself and enjoy this exciting road ahead."

Following the performance of the Beatles' "Blackbird" by the Buchanan High School Choir, Buchanan's three senior speakers — Addison Warmbein, Grantland Waggoner and Jacob Stines-Court — delivered on what were their final assignments as high school students and looked back on their time as Bucks.

Warmbein was the first to speak. She encouraged her classmates to be passionate about their futures and to stay true to themselves.

"Even if you did not fully embrace being yourself during High School, now is your chance to do so," she said. "This will always be our greatest strength. Don't change for anyone if you're proud of what makes you different? As we walk across this stage, leave it behind. Step into that world like you stepped into high school – cautious and excited for what's next."

Waggoner was next, thanking friends, family, teachers and staff for their support and encouraging classmates to embrace adversity.

"If we continue to let these past fears and doubts prevent us from moving forward, we may never reach our true potential to truly fulfill what we're here to do," he said. "We have to face those tough, uncomfortable decisions head-on. A true believer isn't someone who avoids challenges, they face them every single day. How can we overcome these obstacles if we don't face them? How can we grow and become better people if we don't push ourselves out of our comfort zones? If we never make uncomfortable decisions in life, what are we really achieving? Change is inevitable but imperative for us to succeed. Personally, I'm terrified of what comes next and as Winnie the Pooh says, 'How lucky am I to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.'"

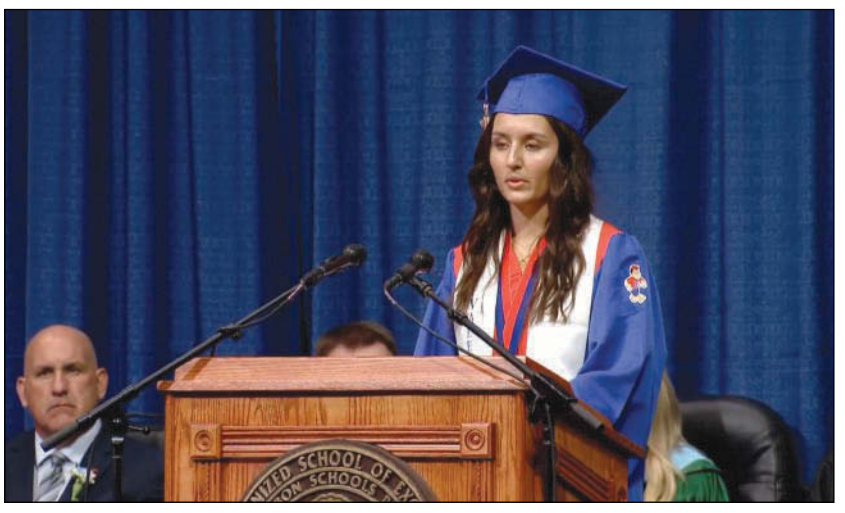
Stines-Court closed the speeches by quoting the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

"All of you standing here tonight have overcome challenges and obstacles that have shaped and defined you and to who you are today," he said. "As the Red Hot Chili Peppers say, 'we'll make it to the moon if you have to crawl.' The truth is, I never expected any of this – to even think about giving a speech in front of all of you – but it just happened. That's the beauty of change, it just happens. But all the things that I've done – all of my accomplishments, everything on my letter major and what I've learned – would never be if it wasn't for all of you here tonight, so thank you. I will forever be indebted to all of you for changing my life. And always remember, try to be the change you want the world to see. No matter what you go on to do, you will change the world in some way. So go out there and try something. It might just turn your life around for the better.

"And always remember, it's the way you change the world that defines what you want the world to be."

Edwardsburg celebrates Class of 2025

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com



SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

EDWARDSBURG — Thursday evening, Edwardsburg High School seniors donned blue and orange robes to close the chapter of their high school experience.

Edwardsburg Public Schools hosted a graduation ceremony for the Class of 2025 Thursday, May 22 in the school gymnasium. The event featured performances of Brian Balmages' "Summer Resounding" by the high school band, Edward Elgar's "Fanfare and Recessional" by the high school choir and speeches from Salutatorian Kaylee Seabolt and three Valedictorians – Mason Baldwin, Julia Lewis and Madelyn Pobuda — who delivered on what were their final assignments as high school students and looked back on their time as Eddies.

First to take the stage was Seabolt, who encouraged her classmates to live without regrets.

"We only have one life to live and these next years are our opportunity to discover what and who we are," she said. "To take a path and decide it is not the right one, and to change it. To make mistakes and to learn from them. Ultimately, this is our time to leave our youth with no regrets and the only things we will ever truly regret are the chances we never take. To close off, I would like to thank the class of 2025 for making this last year one to remember and these last 13 years ones to be proud of."

Next up to the podium was Baldwin, who ensured his fellow graduates that they will be able to overcome obstacles in their way.

"Humanity is built to handle change, no matter how severe it may be," he said. "My advice to you is to recognize that you

See CELEBRATES, Page A6

Community celebrates Brandywine Class of 2025

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KRISTIN BIVENS

NILES CHARTER TOWNSHIP — 100 students walked across the Brandywine gymnasium stage for the last time May 22 as Brandywine High School celebrated its Class of 2025 with a graduation ceremony.

Following the performance of James Swearingen's "Follow the River" by the Brandywine High School Band, Brandywine Superintendent Travis Walker delivered an introductory speech and Principal Evan Winkler congratulated the graduates on their special day.

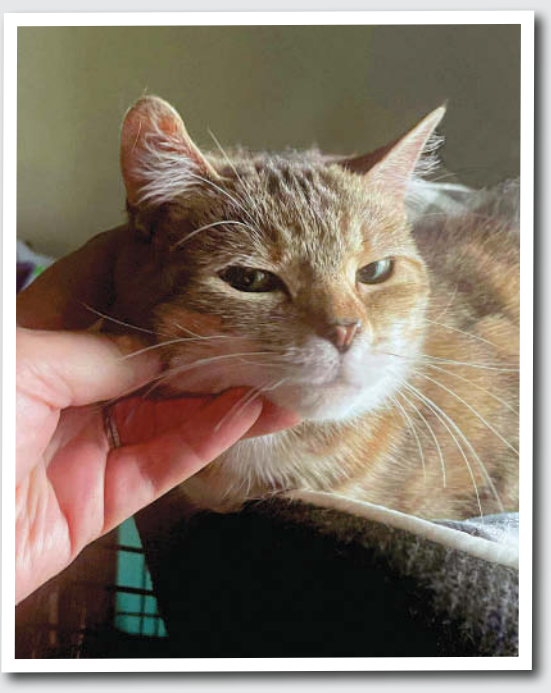
Salutatorian Miriam Peterson and seven Valedictorians — Alexandra Curtis-Lee, Adelyn Drotoz, Aubree Murray, Ireland Prenkert, Bailey Roeder, Carter Sobecki, Adam Starr, Lexi Troup — delivered on what were their final assignments as high school students and looked back on their time as Bobcats.

The Brandywine High School Choir's performance of "Like an Eagle" by Carl Strommen was followed by the presentation of diplomas and the movement of tassels.

Wedding Announcement: Hunt-Murray

Angella Hunt, of Niles, and Randall Murray, of Niles, will marry Monday, June 26, 2025.

PET OF THE WEEK



Nooner is a sweet, social cat who gets along wonderfully with people, other cats and even dogs. Nooner's family had to let them go due to relocating to a strict pet two-pet-limit residence. If you can open your heart and home to Nooner, please email seven starsanctuary@gmail.com.

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Opinion

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bringing awareness to human trafficking

When Democrat congressional representatives started making trips to El Salvador to bring back to our United States cities and communities a deported wife abuser and human trafficker captured on police cam, we decided to look into the Left's contention that very few illegal aliens are criminals. It turns out that "Increased Illegal Immigration Brings Increased Crime: Almost 2/3 of Federal Arrests Involve Non-Citizens" (Heritage Crime and Justice, June 20, 2023).

Arrests are high and convictions low for illegal aliens because of sanctuary legal protections from being held, tried and convicted. So the Democrats' argument for due process was already defeated by the sanctuary cities they control. They say Republicans deprive human traffickers of their due process but sanctuary laws deprive traffickers and victims of due process and citizens at large are left at great risk of recidivist crimes.

We cracked the code on conviction numbers for illegals, but in the process discovered that the State of Michigan has become anywhere from #12 to #7 most human trafficked in the nation. If that doesn't shock you, consider that Berrien County ranks #15 worst out of 83 counties. We reached out to the Michigan Abolitionist Project and Homeland Security and on May 19 launched a Human Trafficking Awareness Campaign for Berrien County and our state.

Judging from reactions to the campaign, human trafficking appears to be a well-guarded secret. A congressional report from January reveals that "Slavery is alive and well today all across the world, and it comes in the form of human trafficking." Forced sex exploitation, domestic servitude, and factory and agricultural work are the common forms.

One way the United States has helped curb human trafficking is improving border security with President Trump's virtual closure of both borders - Canada and Mexico. The number was in the millions, and Trump has curbed human trafficking mightily in the process of closing those borders. That does not mean a huge problem within our nation does not still need to be addressed.

Michigan's borders have long been "fluid passageways that, while tightly controlled at airports and seaports, might offer easier access through less monitored land crossings," according to "A Closer Look at Human Trafficking in Michigan." Canada Border Services Agency CBSA reported 3,000 crossings from Canada in June 2024. When President Trump came into office in January, that number dropped to 359.

Another necessary tool is awareness. Michigan's "extensive network of highways and transportation systems," especially the 1-94 corridor from Chicago to Detroit, creates critical pathways for human trafficking. "A Closer Look" says traffickers "transport their victims rapidly" and "evade law enforcement, constantly staying one step ahead...shuttling victims from one location to another, complicating efforts to track and intercept their operations."

Shared Hope International gave Michigan an F in handling human trafficking. The next step for our group is to gather statistics for investigations, arrests, and convictions of human trafficking in Berrien County. Bringing human traffickers back into our streets is just about the worst thing our leaders could do for this situation. What are the Democrats thinking? At this point our leaders need to be concerned about the lack of freedom and justice for those bought and sold into slavery right under our noses.

By Carla Johnson, Buchanan
And Brenda Beadenkopf, Niles

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act: Who Really Benefits?

In response to claims that cutting government spending will lead to economic prosperity, it's vital to look at what this "One Big Beautiful Bill" really does. Rather than offering relief to working families, the bill largely shifts money away from those struggling to make ends meet, and instead it moves the money upward to those in upper income brackets. Analyses show that while many programs designed to help lower-income families are being cut, tax breaks would boost the pockets of top earners and corporations—even as the poorest communities see a decline in their resources. (S. Zhang, Truthout, 5/21/25; D. Hyatt, Investopedia, 5/22/25.)

Fiscal irresponsibility is another huge issue. Rather than really saving money, the projected tax cuts, combined with increased spending included in the bill, are estimated to add nearly $3.8 trillion to the national debt over the next decade. This ballooning deficit means that down the road, cuts and reductions in other vital areas will be forced upon the public. (G. Petras & J. Borrensen, USA Today, 5/21 & 23, 2025; N. Russell, USA Today, 5/22/25)

The impact on healthcare and social services is dire. Essential programs like Medicaid and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), which millions rely on for health coverage and food support, will face severe cuts. Instead of creating a more secure future, these policies risk leaving vulnerable populations without a safety net—deepening economic inequality and making it even harder for working families to thrive. (National Health Law Program, 5/22/25; S. Zhang, Truthout, 5/21/25)

In conclusion, while being described as a pathway to fiscal discipline and a "Golden Age," this bill instead redistributes wealth upwards and cuts essential public services. These changes could have long-lasting negative effects on everyday Americans.

Naomi Ludman,
Dowagiac

It seems Walberg cares less for our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren paying the debt created by his tax cuts for billionaire buddies.

Walberg's actions the worst kind of partisan hypocrisy

Dear Editor,

How does Rep. Tim Walberg, (R., MI 5), begin a letter with:

"For far too long, our nation has dealt with reckless spending that has driven the United States into a fiscal crisis. The federal government currently has over $36 trillion in debt, with debt continuing to accrue each day."

And then justify his vote for such spending? His "big, beautiful bill" raises the debt ceiling by four TRILLION more dollars, guaranteeing the kind of spending he claims to oppose, and cuts taxes on billionaires' income, which is only partially offset by cuts to Medicaid, nutrition programs and health care research, all programs most Americans depend upon. The deficits and debt are going to explode, a situation Walberg's fellow Republican calls a "debt bomb".

It seems Walberg cares less for our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren paying the debt created by his tax cuts for billionaire buddies. It wasn't always this way. Rep. Walberg started his political career a fiscal conservative in the Michigan Legislature, and was opposed to this kind of fiscal irresponsibility as recent as 2021, (see https://walberg.house.gov/returning-fiscal-responsibility), I suppose it depends on who is proposing the profligate spending, which makes his actions the worst kind of partisan hypocrisy. Too bad.

Jim Pedersen,
Cassopolis

Empowering hardworking Americans through one 'big, beautiful bill'

By CONGRESSMAN TIM WALBERG (MI-05)

For far too long, our nation has dealt with reckless spending that has driven the United States into a fiscal crisis. The federal government currently has over $36 trillion in debt, with debt continuing to accrue each day.

Walberg

In November, the American people made it clear that we must rein in out-of-control government spending through budgetary reforms, reducing the tax burden, and getting rid of government waste. After experiencing runaway inflation year after year, the American people gave us a mandate to alleviate the resulting financial burdens.

Since then, House Republicans have been working behind the scenes to create a comprehensive package that provides relief for families, workers, and small businesses. In April, the House and Senate agreed on a budget resolution that included reconciliation instructions for specific committees.

Under my leadership as Chair, the Education and Workforce Committee was instructed to identify at least $330 billion in savings. The Student Success and Taxpayer Savings Plan is estimated to produce $349.1 billion in savings while bringing much-needed reform in three areas: simplified loan repayment, streamlined student loan options, and accountability for students and taxpayers. Together, these reforms will provide economic mobility for our students and families.

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act represents the culmination of each instructed committee's plan to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse in Washington and make vital investments in our communities. In total, the bill would provide over $1.6 billion in savings, allowing the federal government to be better stewards of American tax dollars and put us back on the path to fiscal prosperity.

The cornerstone of the package is the permanent expansion of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, which revitalized our economy, unleashing unprecedented job growth and higher wages for working families. Two years after being signed into law, real median household income increased by $5,000 and real wages rose by 4.9%, allowing families to pocket more of their hard-earned money. The reforms also incentivized businesses to invest more in the U.S., ending the decades-long trend of U.S. companies shipping operations overseas.

If these critical provisions were to expire, residents of Michigan's 5th Congressional District would see a 27% tax hike. This means that a middle-income family of 4 in the district would see a $1,240 tax increase, equating to about 6 weeks' worth of groceries.

An estimated 33,380 small businesses in MI-05 would also be hit with a 43.4% tax rate if these provisions expire, creating uncertainty for business owners and their workers. By making the tax cuts permanent for these mom-and-pop shops, we can provide these employers with stability, incentivizing them to invest in their businesses and workers.

The package also includes critical priorities to deliver on the commitment made to American workers. American workers across numerous industries depend on tipped wages to support their families. The "No Tax on Tips" policy in the bill will ensure that these workers can keep more of their hard-earned money and boost the economy. Similarly, "No Tax on Overtime" will allow hardworking Americans who put in long hours to keep more of their earnings. These commonsense policies will put more money back in workers' pockets, providing relief.

Many have alleged that this bill would cut Medicaid, a program that serves the most vulnerable people in our community. However, these claims are divorced from reality, as the package would strengthen Medicaid for children, expectant mothers, individuals with disabilities, and the elderly, just like the program was intended. House Republicans want to ensure that the estimated 1.4 million illegal immigrants, the 4.8 million able-bodied adults choosing not to work, and the 1.2 million individuals who are ineligible for the program but are currently enrolled aren't draining the already-burdened system. By protecting Medicaid from this waste, fraud, and abuse of taxpayer dollars, we can secure and sustain the program for those it was intended to serve for generations to come.

Hardworking Americans deserve to keep more of their hard-earned dollars and deserve policies that lower prices and strengthen our economy. I urge the Senate to follow the House's lead and pass the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which represents a generational opportunity to restore fiscal sanity, invest in our communities, and usher in a new Golden Age in America.

Niles Daily Star

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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING
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Published Saturday except holidays when the postal service does not deliver mail: New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day at 25 N. Second St., Niles, Michigan, by Leader Publications LLC. Periodicals paid at the Niles Post Office, 741 Broadway St. Postmaster: Send change of address to Circulation Manager, The Daily Star, **25 N. Second St., Niles, MI 49120**. Home Delivery by mail is local: $7.50/month, out of town: $10.50/month.

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COMICS & PUZZLES

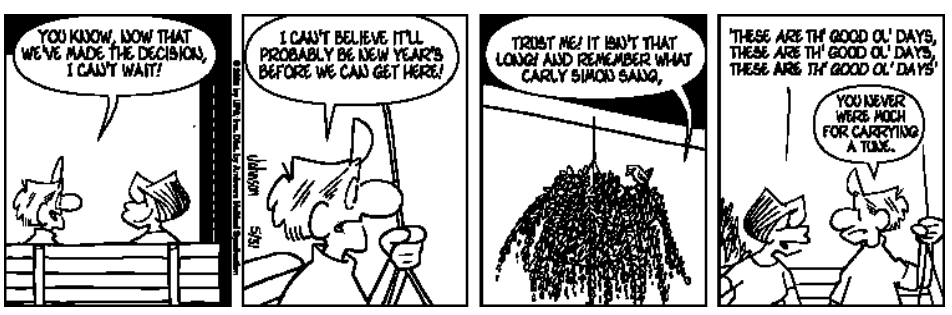
ADAM

HERE YOU GO! MY FIRST CUP OF COFFEE AS A BARISTA.
IT SMELLS WONDERFUL.
AND I LOVE THAT YOU PUT IT IN A TO-GO CUP!
AND YOU SPELLED MY NAME "ADDIM"!
AT KATY'S, WE GIVE YOU THE FULL COFFEE SHOP EXPERIENCE.
HARRELL
5-31

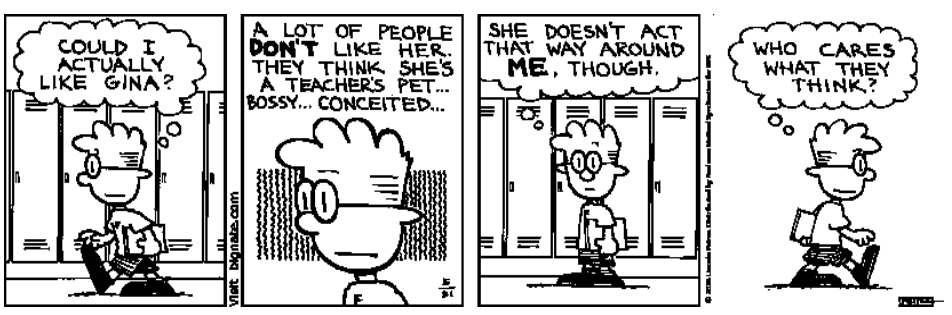
ALLEY OOP

LISTEN, GUARDS. YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN PLAY THE TRUTH-AND-LIE GAME.
ONE OF US TELLS THE TRUTH, EXCEPT ON WEDNESDAYS. AND ONE OF US LIES 60% OF THE TIME.
OOH! AND ONE OF US LIES WAY MORE OFTEN THAN HER FRIENDS SUSPECT.
I TRULY DON'T KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON WITH YOU TWO. I SHOULD LIE DOWN.
IF WE LET YOU IN, WILL YOU STOP BEING SO ANNOYING?
WELL...
YES!
5/31

ARLO & JANIS


YOU KNOW, NOW THAT WE'VE MADE THE DECISION, I CAN'T WAIT!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'LL PROBABLY BE NEW YEAR'S BEFORE WE CAN GET HERE!
TRUST ME! IT WON'T THAT LONG! AND REMEMBER WHAT CARLY SIMON SANG,
'THESE ARE TH' GOOD OL' DAYS, THESE ARE TH' GOOD OL' DAYS, THESE ARE TH' GOOD OL' DAYS'
YOU NEVER WERE MUCH FOR CARRYING A TUNE.
5/31

BIG NATE


COULD I ACTUALLY LIKE GINA?
A LOT OF PEOPLE DON'T LIKE HER. THEY THINK SHE'S A TEACHER'S PET... BOSSY... CONCEITED...
SHE DOESN'T ACT THAT WAY AROUND ME., THOUGH.
WHO CARES WHAT THEY THINK?
visit: Boinkie.com

BORN LOSER

I'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO YOU, THORNAPPLE...
YOU SURE KNOW HOW TO GET YOUR MONEY'S WORTH WHEN YOU PLAY GOLF!
HOW SO, CHIEF?
YOU GOT TO HIT YOUR BALL TWICE AS MUCH AS I GOT TO HIT MINE TODAY!
Art Sansom 5/31
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FRANK & ERNEST

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SODOKU PUZZLE

HOW TO PLAY: Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

DIFFICULTY RATING: 5/5

ANSWER ON PAGE 6

5			8	9		7		
	9			6		5	8	
				5			2	4
8				4				
	1		7		5		6	
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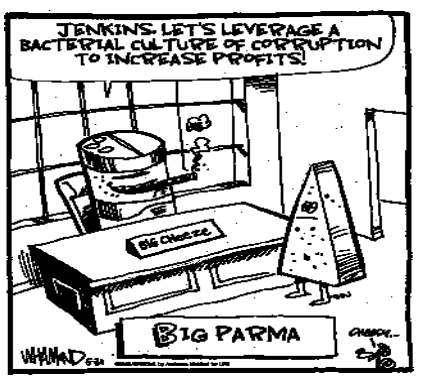
		9		8	4			3

MODERATELY CONFUSED

REALITY CHECK

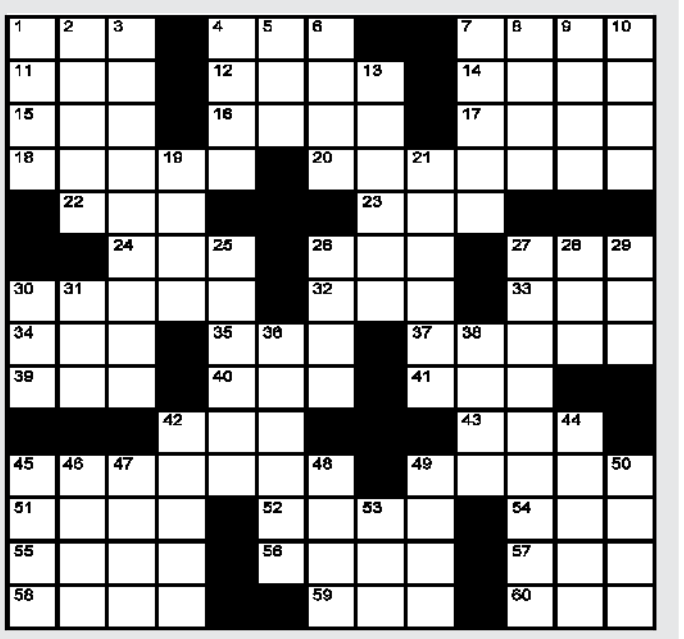


CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS
1 Hee- —
4 Elvis Costello song
7 A pronoun
11 Cakes and —
12 A comb makes one
14 Sported
15 Nemesis
16 Prince in opera
17 Director — Kazan
18 Monopoly piece
20 Left the union
22 Not many
23 Trendy
24 Homer's TV neighbor
26 "— Quixote"
27 Rotating part
30 Sierra —
32 Samovar
33 Days long gone
34 Guitar's smaller cousin
35 Swamp
37 "To — — human ..."
39 Ruin
40 Bother
41 Symbol in Morse code
42 Literary collection
43 Take a chair
45 Sweepstakes
49 Lustrous fabric
51 Help in wrongdoing
52 Apiece
54 Actress — Thurman
55 — fide
56 Fully developed
57 Short swim
58 Prophet
59 Boy
60 Actors Norton and Begley Jr.

DOWN
1 Tool handle
2 Standoffish
3 Bag for two-day vacations
4 Twirl
5 Crone
6 Love god
7 Woolen fabric
8 Keep
9 Toledo's lake
10 Fermented honey drink
13 Seism
19 Jug with a handle
21 Bamboozled
25 Give the meaning of
26 Submerge
27 Sureness
28 Boxing great
29 Hosp. workers
30 Not talking
31 Alias (Abbr.)
36 Pencil end
38 Sub — (in secret)
42 Fragrant oil
44 Shy
45 Cars for hire
46 Reed instrument
47 Hawaii's state bird
48 Scut
49 Storage building
50 Snoozes
53 Books pro

ANSWER ON PAGE 6



5-31

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BREVITY

HEART OF THE CITY

THE GUYS ARE UPSET THAT YOU KEEP WINNING AT POKER.
SO I'M NOT INVITED ANYMORE?
YOU'RE INVITED TO EVERYTHING I DO. BUT WE MIGHT TRY PLAYING SOME OTHER GAMES.
I CAN TEACH THEM HOW TO PLAY SPADES!
I'D LIKE TO MAINTAIN THESE FRIENDSHIPS, NOT DESTROY THEM.
UNO IT IS!
Sigh
HEART OF THE CITY © 2025 ANDREWS MCMEEL
GOCOMICS.COM/HEARTOFTHECITY

Niles' non-traditional programs graduate Class of 2025

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — Dozens of friends, family and community members gathered at Michiana Christian Embassy, 1922 E. Main St., Niles, Tuesday night as 54 graduates from Niles Adult Education, Niles Cedar Lane and WAY Niles programs were able to be recognized for their hard work and call themselves high school graduates.

Howard-Ellis Assistant Principal Heather Loos was the night's guest speaker and delivered words of encouragement to the graduates.

"Many of you are sitting here tonight, thinking you'll never step into school again – believe me, I've been there," she said. "But don't confuse being done with school with being done with learning. Education isn't just school. It's growth, it's freedom, it's the power to choose what you want next. So, choose something. Try something and don't stop. This moment should not be taken lightly. You all should be very proud. You are capable, you are resilient and you are enough. Just as you are? I will leave you with my favorite quote from Ellen Johnson Solis: 'If your dreams don't scare you, they aren't big enough.' Congratulations Class of 2025, Go make the most of your life because it's yours."

Jennifer Kirksey of NCS Custodians presented two Kick The Can Scholarships to Brooke Loftus and Trinity Cady. Prior to the presentation of graduates, the students were invited to the podium to dedicate their achievements to friends, teachers and family members.

Cedar Lane senior Brook Loftus was the class' student speaker and congratulated his classmates and encouraged them to accomplish their goals.

"Give the people in your life the opportunity to try again," she said. "Give second chances and take second chances. Just understand that every single person in the world is going to change. Just know that there is love to be found in every part of the world. Maybe you already have your second chance, so take a third or of fourth, however many it takes to get back on your feet."

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TANYA HAGEN

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CELEBRATES

Continued from page A3

can overcome this change, even if it doesn't feel like it at first. You will find people who can make that change much easier to bear if you're willing to take the first step down. I can promise you that much. And I'm wearing the white sash that says 'valedictorian', which I'm pretty sure means that my advice has to be 100 percent correct."

The penultimate valedictorian to take the stage was Lewis, who hopes that she and her classmates will continue to cherish the precious memories made.

"Today is a celebration of the future as all of our efforts have come to fruition and we are rewarded by becoming leaders to shape the future with integrity, compassion and courage. I hope that we can each look back at this moment and cherish the memories we have had at Edwardsburg."

The final valedictorian to take the stage was Pobuda, who encouraged her classmates to lead with pride, passion and purpose.

"Class of 2025, let's take our pride, passion and purpose and go out there not just to do well, but to do great and dominate, like my dad always says. Let's build lives that are bold, compassionate and true to who we are. The world is waiting and we are ready."

Notice of Public Hearing on Increasing Property Taxes

The Board of Education of the Buchanan Community Schools will hold a public hearing on a proposed increase of 0.6156 mills in the operating tax millage rate to be levied in 2025.

The hearing will be held on Monday June 9, 2025 at 6:00 p.m., at Buchanan Middle School Bistro 601 W. Fourth Street, Buchanan, MI.

The date and location of the meeting to take action on the proposed additional millage will be announced at this public meeting.

If adopted, the proposed additional millage will increase operating revenues from ad valorem property taxes 3.54% over such revenues generated by levies permitted without holding a hearing. If the proposed additional millage rate is not approved the operating revenue will increase by 0.41% over the preceding year's operating revenue.

The taxing unit publishing this notice, and identified below, has complete authority to establish the number of mills to be levied from within its authorized millage rate.

This notice is published by:
Buchanan Community Schools
401 W. Chicago St.
Buchanan, MI 49107
(269) 695-8401

The Board of Education of the Buchanan Community Schools will hold a public hearing on a proposed increase of .6156 mills in operating tax millage rate to be levied in 2025. Please note, however, that Buchanan Community Schools levied 18 mills for its operating millage in 2024, and proposes to levy 18 mills again in 2025.

BOARD

Continued from page A1

Area Chamber of Commerce representative Fran Terry and Mayor Mark Weedon.

The newly constituted board is expected to hold its first meeting in June to start developing plans to promote economic development. A total of 14 people applied to be on the DDA board earlier this month and were interviewed by Weedon and City Manager Tony McGhee.

Tuesday, Weedon expressed high hopes for the new DDA board and urged the other applicants to stay involved.

"Sitting through three days of interviews really made me aware of the amount of skill and talent we have here in Buchanan," he said. "People spoke about what the city means to them and the importance of the community. I didn't think we would get all these applicants are our five year pause. It will be exciting to see the rebirth of the DDA."

On the business front, commissioners approved a $20,000 economic incentive grant/forgivable loan to a new coffee shop at 108 West Front St. Community Development Director Rich Murphy reported that Niles business owner Dustin Jankoviak is investing $435,000 in the renovation of the West Front Street building to put in the coffee shop.

The new coffee shop is expected to open early next year in the former Harger building next door to the Buchanan post office. The building is currently home to the Home Source Group realty company.

Jankoviak said he opened the 2nd and Main business in downtown Niles to create a gathering place for the community and he wants to do the same thing in Buchanan. He noted that he's no stranger to Buchanan as his father had a business in town for 20 years and he worked in Buchanan himself in the past.

STANDOFF

Continued from page A1

Later, two adult males, one adult female and one juvenile female, exited the apartment to surrender to police. The Berrien County Tactical Response Unit was called to the scene to assist with securing the apartment. A search warrant was executed at the apartment with firearms and fired shell casings seized.

As a result of this investigation a 24-year-old Niles male and a 21-year-old Dowagiac male were arrested and lodged at BCSO Jail for firearms related felony criminal charges. The names of the accused will be released after their arraignment. No persons were reported to have been injured related to this investigation.

CROSSWORD ANSWER
From Page 5

H	A	W	■	S	H	E	■	T	H	E	M
A	L	E	■	P	A	R	T	■	W	O	R	E
F	O	E	■	I	G	O	R	■	E	L	I	A
T	O	K	E	N	■	S	E	C	E	D	E	D
■	F	E	W	■	■	M	O	D	■	■	■	■
■	■	N	E	D	■	D	O	N	■	C	A	M
M	A	D	R	E	■	U	R	N	■	E	L	D
U	K	E	■	F	E	N	■	E	R	R	I	S
M	A	R	■	I	R	K	■	D	O	T	■	■
■	■	■	A	N	A	■	■	■	S	I	T	■
C	O	N	T	E	S	T	■	S	A	T	I	N
A	B	E	T	■	E	A	C	H	■	U	M	A
B	O	N	A	■	R	I	P	E	■	D	I	P
S	E	E	R	■	■	L	A	D	■	E	D	S

SUDOKU ANSWER
From Page 5

5	4	1	8	9	2	7	3	6
2	9	3	4	6	7	5	8	1
7	6	8	3	5	1	9	2	4
8	7	2	1	4	6	3	9	5
9	1	4	7	3	5	8	6	2
6	3	5	9	2	8	1	4	7
4	8	6	5	7	3	2	1	9
3	2	7	6	1	9	4	5	8
1	5	9	2	8	4	6	7	3

DEATH NOTICES

Geraldine Ignowski, 79, passed away on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, in Cassopolis, Michigan. Arrangements have been entrusted to and are pending with Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Clyde Corbit, 82, of Cassopolis, died Wednesday, May 21, 2025. Arrangements are pending at Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis.

Leon P. Page, 88, of Cassopolis, died Thursday, May 22, 2025. Arrangements are pending at Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis.

Larry Ashley Reihl, 77, of Niles, Michigan, passed away on May 25, 2025. Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Maria Castillo, 76, of Berrien Springs, passed away Monday, May 26, 2025 at Corewell Health, St. Joseph. Arrangements have been entrusted to and are pending with Allred Funeral Home.

Anthony Lewis Henry, 68, passed away on Monday, May 19, 2025, in Edwardsburg, Michigan. Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

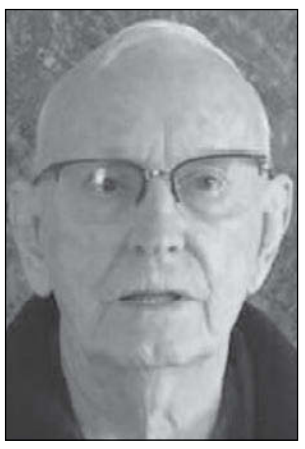
William Earl Camelet, 86, passed away on Friday, May 23, 2025, in Niles, Michigan. Arrangements have been entrusted to and are pending with Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Harold Earl DeMass, 80, of Niles, Michigan, passed away on May 25, 2025. Services will be on Monday, June 2, at 11:30am, at Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Sherry Lynn Mayer, 79, passed away on Saturday, May 24, 2025, in Niles, Michigan. Arrangements have been entrusted to and are pending with Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Joanne Hall, passed away May 27, 2025. Arrangements are pending at Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis.

OBITUARIES



Clyde Kenneth Corbit

November 27, 1942 - May 21, 2025

Clyde Kenneth Corbit,82, of Cassopolis, died peacefully in the comfort of his family's presence. His life began November 27, 1942 in Niles the sixth of seven children born to Clyde and Agnes Corbit.

Clyde graduated from Cassopolis High School in 1961. He enjoyed being outdoors, doing things like hunting, golfing and softball. Clyde was a volunteer fire fighter for Cassopolis, where he enjoyed Water-ball with his firemen friends, bringing home many trophies. Clyde was an avid NASCAR and women's college basketball fan. He loved to read and watch westerns, as well as, doing cross word puzzles to pass the time. Clyde had a way of communicating with his eyes, that everyone knew what he was thinking. Most of all, he enjoyed the time he spent with family, especially his grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Clyde will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by two daughters, Michele (Ken) Ramsey, Denise (Brian) Anders; three grandchildren, Joshua (Caitlyn) Miller, Ashley (Hesston) Ramsey, Dustin Anders; three great grandchildren, Bella, Lilly, Finn; brother-in- law, Rick Temple and a host of nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, two brothers and four sisters.

Family and friends will gather Saturday, May 31, 2025, at noon in Pleasant View Church of Christ 60550 Crooked Creek Road, Cassopolis.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Clyde be made to Central Cass Fire Department, 23201 M-60, Cassopolis, Michigan, 49031.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

Jo Ann Horvath

August 11, 1946 - May 26, 2025

Jo Ann Horvath 78, of Niles, MI passed from this life on Monday, May 26th, 2025 at 4:45 pm after a long battle with Lewy body dementia.

Jo was born on August 11, 1946 to Merill M. Cox Jr. and Erma (Emerick) Cox. Many happy memories were made growing up on 12 th St in Niles with her younger sister Alice and her life- long best friend Carolyn (Hart) Holmes. She graduated from Niles High School in 1964.

During her early years, she was a grade mother to her two daughters Lori and Gina at Oak Manor Elementary, as well as a Brownie leader. Later, Jo worked for Old Kent Bank before retirement.

Jo was married on July 8, 1979 to Sandor Horvath. They celebrated 45 years of marriage together. To this union, their son Tony Horvath was born. Jo and Sandor enjoyed spending time together. They often would drive to Silver Beach or pick up a pizza in Bridgman and stop at Wako Beach to enjoy Lake Michigan and watch the sunset.

Jo had a great passion for reading and enjoyed many quiet hours getting lost in a good book.

She was a gifted gardener, filling her yard with beautiful flowers like the first crocus of spring, yellow daffodils, purple phlox, black-eyed Susans and her grandmother's white peonies that are over one hundred years old. Jo also was a great cook and baker. She hosted many Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations, and when the grandchildren were over, she enjoyed making their favorite cookies.

Family was very important to Jo and she loved watching her children and grandchildren grow.

Many hours were spent watching basketball, soccer and softball games, plays and musicals, as well as, playing games like Yahtzee and putting puzzles together often late into the night. Many vacations were spent with family visiting the North Carolina coast. Memories were made in love and will never be forgotten.

Those who are left to cherish her memory are her husband Sandor Horvath, her children Lori

(Shepard) Fryer (John), Gina (Shepard) Hahn, Tony Horvath; grandchildren Holly Fryer Evans

(Jayson), Jack Fryer (Leah), Alana Hahn, Leah Horvath, Cameron Horvath and Caitlyn Horvath; great grandchildren Mia Fryer and Jayce Evans; sisters Alice Magro (Danny) and Sandy Sherwood Weaver (Warren).

There will be no service at this time. If you wish to make a donation in remembrance of Jo Ann, please consider supporting Hospice Foundation/ Raclin House, 501 Comfort Place, Mishawaka, IN 46545.

Bruce Robert Lietzke

January 21, 1958 - May 25, 2025

Bruce Robert Lietzke was born on January 21, 1958, in Niles, Michigan, to Virgil and Eleanor Lietzke (both deceased). He is survived by his wife, Judy (Janiszczak), and their two children, Heather and Kyle. Bruce also has three living siblings: Bryon Lietzke, Darlene Cauffman, and Joyce Dalenberg. Prior to his retirement two years ago, he worked as a Terminal Operations Manager at Roadway/ Yellow trucking.

During his grade school and high school years, Bruce and his brother participated in many sports, including baseball, basketball, and football. Although he played high school football, he also performed in the school band. His achievements in high school football earned him a scholarship to play at Midland University.

An avid outdoorsman, Bruce loved to hunt, fish, and trap with friends. When he was no longer able to enjoy these activities, he found joy in watching the birds, deer, and even turkeys in the backyard as they fed from the birdfeeders. Gardening was another passion of his, and every year, the family would work together to plant and tend vegetable and flower gardens.

As a devoted sports fan, Bruce enjoyed watching Detroit teams like the Red Wings, Tigers, and Lions, but his true passion was Notre Dame football. He rarely missed a game, and if he couldn't watch it live, he always recorded it.

Over the years, Bruce made many friends and acquaintances. His proudest and happiest memories revolved around his family, which also included his beloved dogs: Dusty, Molly, Maddie, and Bailey. He cherished the time spent with his wife Judy, Heather and Kyle, and enjoyed numerous family vacations in Hawaii. He relished simply sitting with his family on the patio, taking in the view, and he valued Sunday dinners, where the family would always come together, even when he was ill.

He will be missed, but he is no longer suffering.

Visitation will be Saturday, May 31 from 3 - 6 p.m. at Sujkowski Funeral Home Northpointe, 114 E. Alexis Rd. The funeral service will begin at 6 p.m. in the funeral home with Pastor Bob May presiding.

Memorial donations may be given to St. Jude Children's Hospital or Hospice of Northwest Ohio's Ebeid Center. Condolences can be shared at www.sujkowski.com.

Agnes Brumfield

August 5, 1927 - May 26, 2025

Agnes J. Brumfield, a long-time resident of Niles, MI, passed away peacefully on May 26, 2025, at the age of 97. Born on August 5, 1927, in Niles, she was the beloved daughter of the late John C. Mitchell and Esther E. (Rhoades) Mitchell.

Agnes graduated from Buchanan High School in 1946, where she formed many friends and developed a strong work ethic that would define her career and personal life. On May 22, 1947, she married Stanley Brumfield, with whom she shared over 50 years of marriage until his passing on January 18, 1998. Together, they raised a loving family that included their daughter, Cheryl (Paul) Radtka, and sons, Stephen (Diane), Tim, Gerald, David (Debbie) and John Brumfield.

She was preceded in death by her brothers, Albert and George Mitchell. She leaves behind a legacy of love and cherished memories with her children, her 11 grandchildren, 23 great-grandchildren, and 4 great-great-grandchildren, all of whom will miss her deeply.

Her professional life was marked by her meticulous skills as a bookkeeper, a role she performed with precision and care for 24 years at Thayer's Jewelry in Niles. Agnes also contributed her talents to the Juvenile Shop and J.C. Penney's, where her friendly demeanor and attention to detail were greatly appreciated by all that knew her.

Agnes's commitment to her faith was evident through her active membership at Fairland Christian Church. She was a familiar face to many, known for her tradition of baking cookies every Sunday for over two decades, a gesture that sweetened the lives of countless church friends.

Agnes found joy in the simple pleasures of life, such as tending to her garden, where she cultivated both flowers and vegetables with equal care. Her hands were rarely still, as she was often found crocheting and embroidering, creating beautiful pieces that would become treasured family heirlooms. Agnes also had a love for word puzzles, a hobby that kept her mind sharp and provided endless hours of enjoyment.

Above all, Agnes was a woman who put others first. Her hardworking nature was matched only by her generosity and love for her family. She was a guiding light and source of strength, leaving behind a legacy of kindness and dedication that will be remembered by all who knew her.

Funeral services for Agnes will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 31, 2025 at Palmer Funeral Home - Hoven Chapel, 414 E. Front St. Buchanan, MI. Friends may visit with the family 30 minutes prior to the services. Graveside service and burial will immediately follow at Mission Hills Memorial Gardens in Niles.

Memorial contributions may be made in Agnes's honor to Fairland Christian Church, 1811 River Bluff Rd, Niles, MI 49120.

Online condolences may be left for the family by visiting www.palmerfuneralhomes.com.

Joseph Russell Thompson Sr

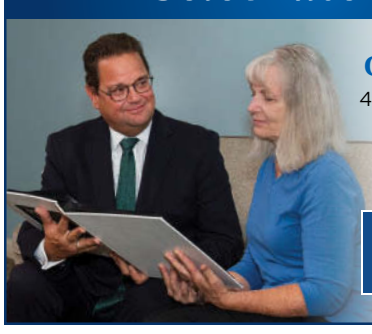
August 11, 1947 - May 11, 2025

Joseph Russell Thompson Sr, 77, of Berrien Springs, MI passed away at his home on Sunday, May 11,2025. Joseph was born in South Bend, Indiana to John and Blanche (Belonga) Thompson on August 11, 1947. He owned JT Motors in Niles, MI. Joseph is survived by his wife; Robin Rudlaff, his children; Joseph Thompson Jr. (Christy), Neiko Rust, daughter in law Angie Thompson, his siblings; Joanne Smith, Edward (Joyce) Thompson. Leanard Thompson,

Michael "Bud" (Linda) Thompson, Minnie (Stan) Shreve, Gladys Bybee, sister-in-law, Jeanne Pomeroy and numerous grandchildren, nieces and nephews. He is preceded by his parents, his son John Thompson, his siblings: Earl Pomeroy, John Thompson, Robert Pomeroy and Robert Thompson. Those wishing to leave an online condolence may do so at www.heritage-chapel.com.

See OBITUARIES, Page A8

Celebrate a life



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OBITUARIES

Continued from page A7

Judy O'Brien

April 6, 1950
- April 5, 2025

Judy (Paul) O'Brien, 74, left this earth on April 5, 2025, with both of her daughters by her side. Judy was born April 6, 1950, in Dowagiac, Michigan. Following high school, she became a dedicated Michigan State University Spartan, where she earned her BA in Education and MA in Outdoor Education.

Upon graduating, Judy returned to Dowagiac to devote her life to teaching, impacting thousands of students over her 30-plus-year career teaching elementary grades in Dowagiac and later working with student teachers at Michigan State University.

Judy had an adventurous spirit and found countless ways to combine her love of teaching with adventures she could share with her students. These included annual trips to Mackinac Island for the Michigan Reading Association's Summer Literature conference and working the Language Arts Camp hosted at Van Buren Youth Camp, introducing her to a myriad of children's authors and illustrators. A speaking engagement with the International Reading Association took her to Ireland, and she traveled to Japan as a Fulbright Fellowship Scholar. Judy also found herself sailing the high seas with two different Teacher at Sea programs. She spent 5 weeks in Woods Hole, MA, sailing around Cape Cod with Sea Education Association, and then boarded a NOAA Stellar Sea Lion cruise off the coast of Alaska. Judy traveled to Australia several times with MSU, leading student teachers on study abroad trips.

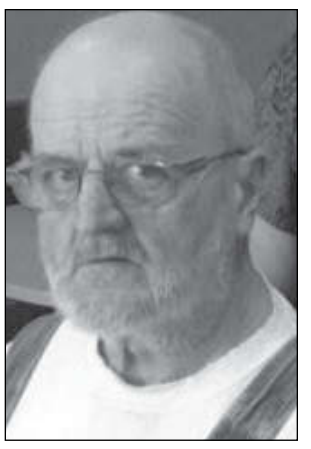
Judy was recognized for her craft throughout her career. She was a state finalist for NASA's Teacher in Space program and was later awarded the Christa McAuliffe Fellowship Grant, giving her a sabbatical to create an intensive writing curriculum for the district. Her unique "Islands" theme for her 1991 5th-grade class earned her Rand McNally's National Geography teacher of the year. She was the recipient of MSU's Distinguished Alumni and Crystal Apple award. She served as a Teacher's Choice Coordinator for the International Reading Association, where her reviews of 300 books per year filled her

home, classroom, and school library bookshelves.

Judy was never happier than when she was with her grandchildren. Her early retirement was spent exposing them to all of her favorite spots like Silver Beach and Sarett Nature Center or simply spending hours swinging in the hammock in her front yard. Later, she took great joy in receiving hugs and spending time listening to her youngest grandson play in her presence.

Judy is survived by her two daughters - Rhiannon (Brian) Mulligan and Jane (Will) Godfrey; three grandchildren - Alanna Mulligan, Teague Mulligan, and Alder Godfrey; three siblings -Jack (Melissa) Paul, Jill Paul, and Jim (Barb) Paul; nephew - Jack (Anna) Paul; and great-niece - Addi Paul. She is preceded in death by her parents - Jack and Eleanor (Sullivan) Paul.

Honoring Judy's wishes, cremation has taken place and her brain has been donated to the Brain Support Network to help advance Alzheimer's research. Rhiannon and Jane would like to thank the staff at Emmanuel Hospice for the generous care they gave Judy over the past two years of her life. Those wishing to honor Judy may make donations to Sarett Nature Center or E. Root Fitch Camp. A celebration of life will take place at the Dowagiac Area History Museum on June 14th, 2025, from 2:30pm-4:30pm. Local arrangements have been entrusted to Clark Chapel and Cremation Services - Starks Family Funeral Homes, Dowagiac. Please visit Judy's personalized webpage to share a memory or leave a condolence to her family at www.clarkch.com.



Brady F. Chaffee

April 16, 1957
- May 18, 2025

Brady Frederick Chaffee Jr., 68, of Vandalia, died May 18, 2025 with family by his side.

His life began April 16, 1957 in Three Rivers, the fifth of eight children born to Brady Sr. and Harriette Chaffee.

Brady lived a simple life and was a simple man. He grew up and went to school in Constantine. When he was young, he enjoyed hunting with his brothers and teasing his sisters. Brady loved his community and was always helpful. He would give sweet corn and the chicken he raised to his neighbors and friends. He maintained the property and raised his own animals at Wildcat Ranch in Marcellus. Brady enjoyed hard work and raising animals. He farmed and was well known as a fabricator and welder, repairing farm equipment. Brady was a prankster and loved to get under people's skin. That was his way of showing love. Brady was always there for his family and friends if they were in need.

Brady will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by one daughter, Christina Farnsworth of Lagrange two sons, Robert (Shannon) Chaffee of Gillette Wyoming, Kevin Chaffee of Vandalia; ten grandchildren; four great grandchildren; three sisters, Judy (Pat) Malone, Theresa (Ken) Blazier, Cathy Sherck; one brother, Dale (Terri) Chaffee and a host of nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, one sister, two brothers and his daughter, Bernita May Chaffee. The family will observe a private remembrance.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

Mary Jane Wood Zabinski

September 13, 1945
- May 8, 2025

Mary Jane Wood Zabinski - Entrepreneur, World Traveler, Photographer, Animal Lover, and Beloved Sister

Born and raised in Niles, Michigan and a longtime resident of the Hilton Head area, Mary Jane died peacefully in Okatie, South Carolina. She was preceded in death by her parents, Jerome W. and Priscilla Barbary Wood, her sister Barbara Wood Cook of Niles, and her husband, Leo Zabinski. She is survived by her sister Carolyn Wood of Okatie, South Carolina.

After her sister received a Ph.D., she asked their mother, "Which of your three daughters is the smartest?" Priscilla responded without hesitation, "Oh, Mary Jane of course!" Her sister was taken back a bit, but then she had to agree. Mary Jane, who received a B.S. degree from Creighton University in Business Administration, became an entrepreneur and owner of several successful businesses. She was the owner and CEO of a Stretch & Sew Fabric Center in Worcester, MA and received awards from the national office for "Top Sales Performance in the New England region." When she moved to Hilton Head she established, developed and operated a new H&R Block franchise. She received awards for franchise growth and also became an Enrolled Agent with the Internal Revenue Service. After five years with H&R Block, she became the CEO of The Ledger Company, an agency that provided medical billing services to local hospitals, laboratories, and physicians, supervising 55 employees and billing over $10,000,000 annually for clients. She retired in 2009.

Mary Jane was a world traveler in every sense of the word. She traveled to 110 countries, many more than once. One of her favorite travel experiences was a two week visit to the Tibetan Children's Village in Dharmsala, India where she taught photography and multimedia development to children in the village. Mary Jane co-authored a 380-page travel book, Maximize Your Cruise and Destination Experience. Also, she and her sister created numerous multimedia travel presentations (containing photos, music, animation and movies) allowing viewers to literally feel the excitement involved in world travel.

Mary Jane grew up on a farm in Michigan surrounded by: ducks, peacocks, pigs, cattle, and many cats, dogs, and horses. As a teenager she was quite successful in showing Arabian horses around the United States. One of her most exciting experiences was winning a 3-Gaited Stake Class when two professional trainers from other farms hoisted her to their shoulders in celebration. Her love of animals continued throughout her life as evidenced by her service on the Board of Directors of the Hilton Head Humane Association and becoming one of three founding members and President of the Spay/Neuter Alliance and Clinic (SNAC).

Committal for Mary Jane Wood Zabinski will be private, on the Wood Family lot in Sumnerville Cemetery, near Niles. Arrangements in Niles are being completed at the Halbritter-Wickens Funeral Home, 615 East Main Street in Niles. Arrangements in Okatie were completed at the Sauls Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a contribution in Mary Jane's memory to your favorite charity or to Jasper Animal Rescue Mission, 1352 Carters Mill Rd, Ridgeland, SC 29936. Condolences may be sent to:

cjwoodnm@gmail.com

and shared at:

https://www.saulsfh.com/obituary/Mary-Jane-Zabinksi

or at:

www.halbritterwickens.com

Mary Jane was a very kind, caring, helpful, happy spirit, who was a blessing to many.

FINAL NOTE from Mary Jane's sister: While writing her obituary, I looked out the window and saw something I had never seen nor heard of before -- a unique black butterfly with white circles on its wings. I knew it was a sign from Mary Jane that she was and would continue to watch over me. I have since learned that black butterflies are symbols of transformation representing the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. Additionally, they personify spiritual protection and guidance from deceased loved ones.

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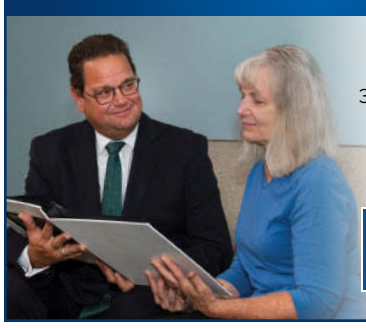
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BASEBALL

Brandywine baseball falls to Bridgman in D3 districts

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

BRIDGMAN — The Brandywine baseball team's postseason journey came to an end Tuesday afternoon.

The Bobcats fell to host Bridgman 5-4 in Division 3 district quarterfinal play. Tied 4-4 entering the eighth inning, the Bees were able to score a run to seal the win.

Kaeden Warfield, Ryder Richard and Brady Bosch each had two hits and Kyler Marshall totaled two hits and two RBIs. Maddox Carpenter added two RBIs.

On the mound, Hudson Aalfs gave up two hits and an earned run in two innings and Richard struck out six batters and surrendered two earned runs in five innings.

Bridgman's Charlie Pagel struck out one batter and gave up three hits to earn the win.

"We did everything we wanted, just didn't take advantage of the opportunities we had," said Brandywine Head Coach David Sidenbender. "I thought we played good and we played tough. I give all the credit to [Head Coach Justin Hahaj] and Bridgman for what they did."

Sidenbender was proud of his team's effort and their accomplishments this season. The Bobcats earned their second straight Lakeland Conference title this year.

"I am extremely proud of my team and the season we had," he said. "We were a very young team that grew and performed well this year... we started or played sometimes four freshmen and three sophomores, so being conference champs and winning 23 games total was great. We just have to work on the little things that win big games and I believe we will."

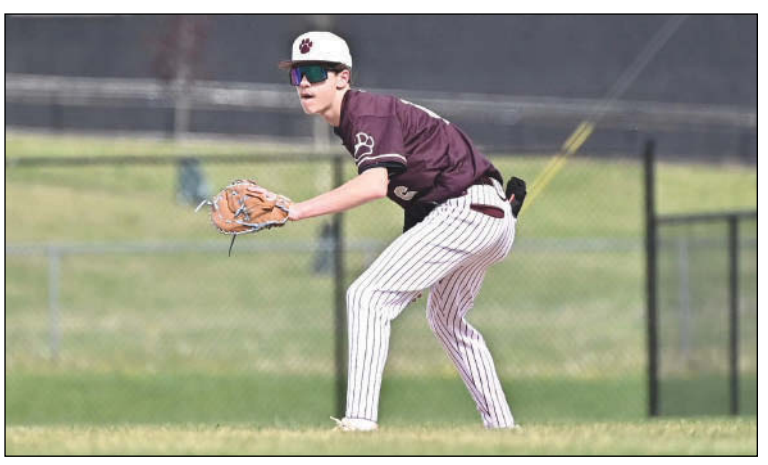
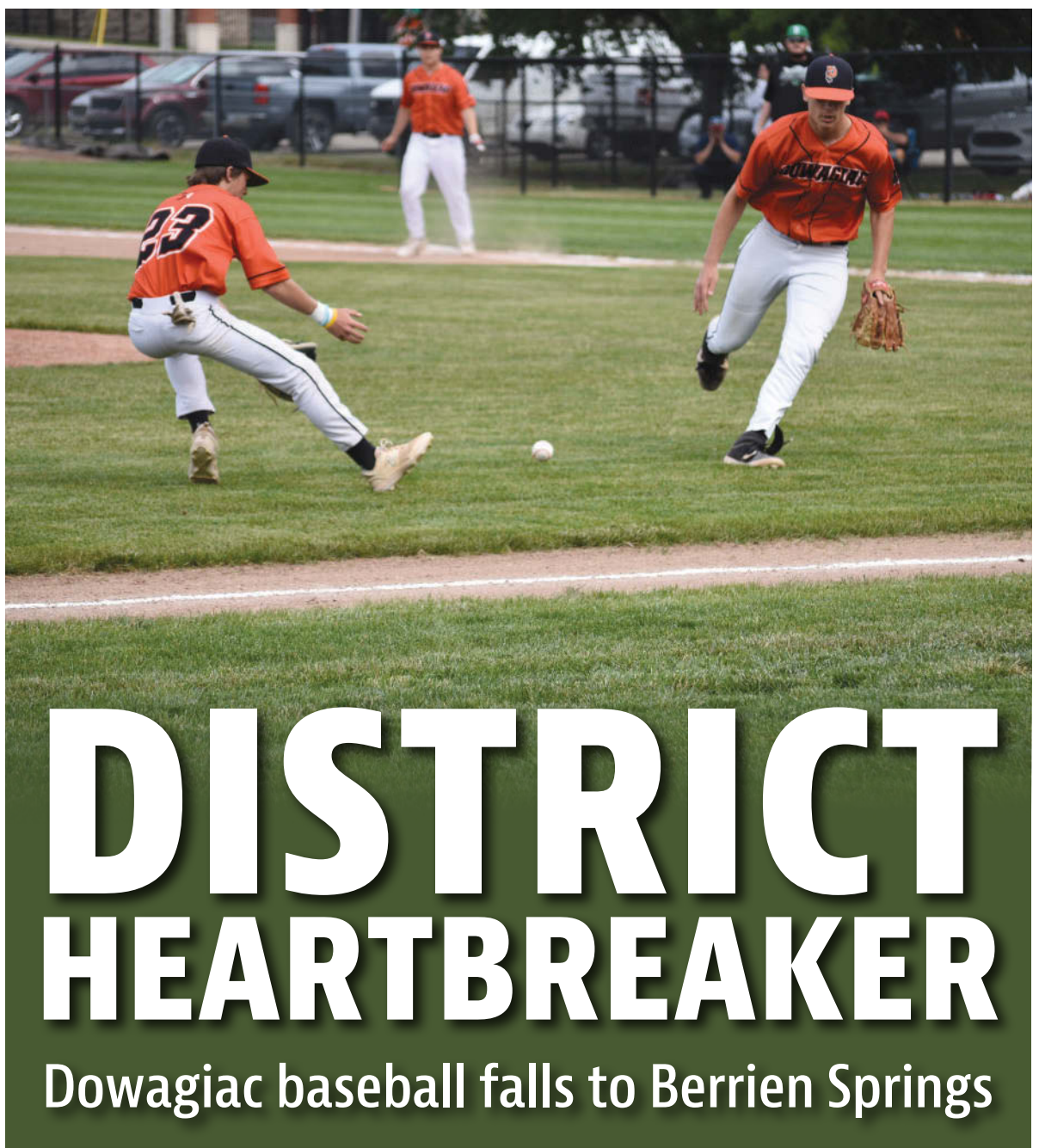


PHOTO COURTESY OF TANYA HAGEN

BASEBALL



DISTRICT HEARTBREAKER

Dowagiac baseball falls to Berrien Springs

By SCOTT HASSINGER
Leader Publications Contributor

DOWAGIAC — Matt Ferry's suicide squeeze in the bottom of the seventh inning helped Berrien Springs squeak out a 3-2 Division 2 district quarterfinal win over Dowagiac Tuesday at Dean Hagen Field.

It was a heartbreaking end for seventh-year Dowagiac coach Keith Schreiber and his Chieftains, who finished the season 9-18.

Berrien Springs advances to Saturday's 10 a.m. district semifinal against Niles back at Dean Hagen Field. St. Joseph meets Stevensville-Lakeshore in the other semifinal at 12:30 p.m. The finals will follow at 3 p.m.

Dowagiac grabbed a 1-0 lead in the top of the second when sophomore courtesy runner Will Sanders scored on Justin Feirick's RBI single.

Berrien Springs scored twice in the bottom half of the second to grab a 2-1 advantage. Eli Rospierski scored on a throwing error at third and Ferry raced home on another Dowagiac error.

Jamal Williams singled with two outs and later scored on an error to help Dowagiac tie the game up at 2-2 after the top of the sixth.

Berrien Springs loaded the bases with two outs in the bottom of the sixth. The Shamrocks' Micah McFarland attempted to steal home but was tagged out by Chieftains' catcher Caiden Freeman ending the frame.

Dowagiac baserunner Jamal Williams takes a lead off the bag at second base.

Berrien Springs retired the Dowagiac side in the top of the seventh.

In the bottom half of the seventh, Rospierski walked, stole second, advanced to third on a sacrifice bunt by Larsen Kibler before scoring the winning run on Ferry's sacrifice-bunt.

Junior Cole Wimberley started on the mound for Dowagiac and went the first 6 1/3 innings allowing just four hits with seven strikeouts and five walks. He pitched himself out of a jam by striking out the side after allowing the first two Shamrock baserunners on during the third inning. He also ended another Berrien Springs scoring threat by striking out two of the final three Dowagiac hitters in the fifth.

"Cole pitched a real outstanding baseball game. They scored a couple runs without getting a

See FALLS, Page B3

SCOTT HASSINGER | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Dowagiac third baseman Aiden Voorhees (23) moves in to field a ground ball for the Chieftains.

BASKETBALL

SMC Begins Search for New Women's Basketball Coach

COMMUNITY REPORT

DOWAGIAC — Southwestern Michigan College announced Wednesday that it is conducting a nationwide search for a new full-time head coach to lead its women's basketball program for the 2025-2026 season and beyond.

Current coach Jay Jenkins notified SMC administration on Sunday that he is leaving the college to pursue other coaching opportunities. During his two seasons at SMC, Jenkins compiled an overall record of 48-15.

"I feel very blessed to have been associated with SMC," he wrote. "I am greatly appreciative of former President Odenwald for the opportunity. This wasn't an easy decision and I am grateful for the rewarding employment and lessons learned at SMC. I pray you, the administrative team, the students and the athletic department have continued success."

"We are grateful to Coach J for guiding the program these past two years," said Athletic Director Rodell Davis. "We had an amazing run, including two berths in the Great

See COACH, Page B3

TRACK & FIELD

Edwardsburg girls track 14th at MITCA state meet

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

BERRIEN SPRINGS — The Edwardsburg girls track team finished 14th at the Michigan Interscholastic Track Coaches Association Division 2 state finals in Berrien Springs Friday, May 23.

Holland Christian won the girls championship with 1,531 points, while Edwardsburg finished with 746 points. Battle Creek Harper Creek was the boys Division 2 champion with 1,393 points.

Edwardsburg's Sarah Pippin had a big day as she tied for first place in the high jump with a leap of 5-0 and was 10th in the discus with a throw of 97-1.

Kennedy Goorhouse finished ninth in the 400-meter dash with a time of 1:02.44,

See TRACK, Page B3

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

SOFTBALL

Buchanan softball sweeps South Haven

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

SOUTH HAVEN — Buchanan was able to sweep host South Haven 1-0 and 7-2 in non-league softball action Friday.

In the first game, A Mailey Ely triple drove in a third-inning Terynn Heller run that proved to be the game-winner. Ely, Caitlyn Horvath (triple), Cameron Carlson, Haylee Legualt and Lea Atkinson (double) tallied hits for the Bucks. On the mound, Legualt struck out two batters and five hits in seven innings.

In game two, Horvath led the way with four hits – including a double – and Ely hhad three hits and two RBIs while Atkinson added two hits and two RBIs. Aspen Berry had two hits and an RBI, Julia Prenkert tallied one hit and one RBI, Legualt had one hit and Singleton added an RBI.

Horvath got the win on the mound, striking out two batters while surrendering six hits and two earned runs.

Buchanan faces Brandywine at noon Saturday in the Division 3 district semifinals at Buchanan High School.

Tuesday, May 27
Buchanan 8-8, Parchment 9-1

Buchanan 022 003 1 – 8 7 1
Parchment 001 000 0 – 1 5 5
W: Hosbein; L: Horvath
2B: (B) Weinberg; (P) K Jackson, T Mckinny, J Morgan
HR: (B) Berry; B Olgine, T Mckinny
Buchanan 022 003 1 – 8 7 1
Parchment 001 000 0 – 1 5 5
W: Horvath, L: K Jackson
2B: (B) L Atkinson, K Singleton, T Coquillard, T Heller, C Horvath 2, C Weinberg; (P) Hosbein

BASKETBALL

South Bend native Ratigan transfers to Notre Dame

COMMUNITY REPORT

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Kelly Ratigan will spend the next phase of her collegiate career in her hometown, as the former Loyola Maryland guard has transferred to play for Notre Dame ahead of the 2025-26 season. She will be a junior with two years of eligibility remaining.

Ratigan, who attended Saint Joseph High School just over a mile from Notre Dame's campus, started 46 career games for the Greyhounds. She was hampered by injury last season, but she averaged 8.4 points, 2.4 rebounds and 1.6 assists in 2023-24 while averaging 31.4 minutes per game.

"We are so excited to welcome Kelly back home to South Bend and Notre Dame!" Karen and Kevin Keyes Family Head Coach Niele Ivey said. "She had an outstanding career at St. Joseph High School, and we couldn't be happier to be a part of her journey moving forward.

"Kelly has an incredible motor and is a crafty scorer and 3-point shooter. She brings quality intangibles, including her leadership and work ethic."

The South Bend native has major ties to Irish athletics, as well. Her father, Brian, is a former Notre Dame football player and currently serves as a surgeon for the athletic department. She has four siblings, and her brother Conor played football for the Irish from 2019-22.

Ratigan is the fifth transfer Notre Dame has added this offseason, joining Malaya Cowles (Wake Forest), Gisela Sanchez (Kansas State), Vanessa de Jesus (Duke) and Iyana Moore (Vanderbilt). Along with Ratigan, de Jesus and Moore are guards.

BASKETBALL

Dyoni Edwards signs with SMC

COMMUNITY REPORT

DOWAGIAC — Dyoni Edwards of Bloomfield Hills High School has signed to continue his academic and basketball career with the Roadrunners. Edwards is a transfer from Alma College.

"Dyoni fills a need that we have in the frontcourt," said SMC Head Coach Rodell Davis. "He has college games under his belt and will make an immediate impact on our team. His length, athleticism and shooting ability make him a great fit for our system."

Edwards is the seventh member of the 2025 SMC Men's Basketball recruiting class, joining Deuce Winston II of Grand Blanc, Karmine Brown of Buchanan, Jovohn Ratliff and Jaylen Ingram from Hillcrest, Josh Dennis of Wayne and Bryce Hayes of Chicago.

The Men's Basketball Roadrunners have had three consecutive winning seasons since reviving the program in 2022 after a 26-year hiatus. In the 2024-25 campaign, SMC knocked off No. 2-ranked South Suburban on the road, breaking the Bulldogs' 65-game home win streak. They finished with an overall record of 16-13 and set 35 team and individual school records during the year.

FOOTBALL

Big Ten Conference announces television schedule for six Michigan football games

COMMUNITY REPORT

ROSEMONT, Ill. — The Big Ten Conference and its television partners announced Thursday the kick times and television network designations for six of the 2025 University of Michigan football games.

For the first time in school history, Michigan will open the season with consecutive night games. The Wolverines begin 2025 with their first-ever meeting against New Mexico on NBC (Aug. 30) and will follow it up with a primetime affair at Oklahoma on ABC (Sept. 6). Both games are scheduled to kick off at 7:30 p.m. ET. U-M will be making its first-ever trip to Norman, Okla., with the only previous game played between the two schools coming nearly 50 years ago in the 1976 Orange Bowl.

Michigan will return to Ann Arbor on Sept. 13 and face Central Michigan at noon on the Big Ten Network. This will be the fifth meeting between the two in-state schools and the first since 2013. U-M has won all four previous matchups with each game contested at Michigan Stadium.

The Maize and Blue will open the Big Ten schedule at Nebraska on Sept. 20 in a 3:30 p.m. ET affair on CBS. The Wolverines have an 8-4-1 record against the Cornhuskers and are 5-2 since Nebraska joined the conference in 2011.

After a bye week, Michigan will return to the field for a Maize Out against Wisconsin on Oct. 4. The homecoming game will kick off at either noon or 3:30 p.m. from Michigan Stadium. The television network and official kick time will be determined at a later date.

The final game receiving early season selection was the annual rivalry against Ohio State on Nov. 29. "The Game" pitting the last two national champions will make its eighth appearance on FOX at noon The Wolverines have won four straight games against the Buckeyes and hold a 62-52-6 advantage in the all-time series.

Single-game tickets will go on sale July 8-11, 2025.

The following are the time and television network selections:

Aug. 30 – New Mexico, 7:30 p.m. ET (NBC)

Sept. 6 – at Oklahoma, 7:30 p.m. ET (ABC)

Sept. 13 – Central Michigan, Noon ET (BTN)

Sept. 20 – at Nebraska, 3:30 pm ET (CBS)

Oct. 4 – Wisconsin, Noon or 3:30 p.m. ET (TBD)

Nov. 29 – Ohio State, Noon ET (FOX)

FOOTBALL

MSU moves season opener to Aug. 29

COMMUNITY REPORT

EAST LANSING, Mich. – The Big Ten Conference announced kickoff times for the first three games of the 2025 Michigan State football season and also for Homecoming on Thursday afternoon.

MSU's season opener has officially been moved to Friday, Aug. 29 against Western Michigan at 7 p.m. in Spartan Stadium; the game was originally scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 30. The game will be televised on FS1. This marks the 11th time in the past 15 years that Michigan State will open with a Friday night game in East Lansing; it's also the 13th time since 2011 that MSU will begin the season on a Friday night.

In Week 2, the Spartans will host Boston College in prime time on Saturday, Sept. 6 at 7:30 p.m. on NBC.

Michigan State closes out the nonconference portion of its schedule on Saturday, Sept. 13 against Youngstown State at 3:30 p.m. on BTN.

MSU's Homecoming game against UCLA on Saturday, Oct. 11 has been set for a 12 p.m. kickoff; the TV network will be announced at a later date.

Two other Spartan road games were given time windows for a possible kickoff. MSU's games at Nebraska on Saturday, Oct. 4 and at Indiana on Saturday, Oct. 18 will start at either 12/3:30/4 p.m. ET. Those kickoffs will be confirmed at a later date.

2025 MSU football schedule (as of May 29, 2025)

Friday, Aug. 29: Western Michigan, 7 p.m. (FS1)

Saturday, Sept. 6: Boston College, 7:30 p.m. (NBC)

Saturday, Sept. 13: Youngstown State, 3:30 p.m. (BTN)

Saturday, Sept. 20: at USC

Saturday, Oct. 4: at Nebraska, 12/3:30/4 p.m. ET

Saturday, Oct. 11: UCLA, 12 p.m. (Homecoming)

Saturday, Oct. 18: at Indiana, 12/3:30/4 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 25: Michigan

Saturday, Nov. 1: at Minnesota

Saturday, Nov. 15: Penn State

Saturday, Nov. 22: at Iowa

Saturday, Nov. 29: vs. Maryland (Ford Field, Detroit)

FOOTBALL

ND's Moore named to Lott IMPACT Trophy Watch List

COMMUNITY REPORT

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Sophomore cornerback Leonard Moore has been named to the 2025 Lott IMPACT Trophy Watch List, an award recognizing college football's best defensive player in character and performance.

Moore enters his true sophomore season after being named the FWAA Freshman Defensive Player of the Year and selected to the Freshman All-America teams for FWAA, ESPN, The Athletic (First Team), Pro Football Focus, the College Football Network and the 247Sports True Freshman All-America Team.

In 2024, Moore started 10 games and totaled 48 tackles with two interceptions, 2.0 TFL, 10 pass breakups, two forced fumbles and a quarterback hurry. In the first two starts of his career, he totaled seven tackles in each.

He made his mark in several games for the Irish en route to wins in the Sugar Bowl and Orange Bowl and an appearance in the 2025 CFP National Title game. In the regular season finale at USC, Moore recorded five pass breakups, tied for the second-most in a single game by any FBS player in 2024, and the only freshman in the country to achieve the feat last season.

In his first-career start vs. Louisville, Moore led the entire defense with seven tackles and forced a fumble that resulted in a Notre Dame touchdown drive. He followed it up with another seven-tackle performance, adding a tackle for a loss of 16 yards and two pass breakups at Georgia Tech. He compiled two-consecutive stops to force a turnover on the last drive of the first half, cementing an Irish lead.

LOTT IMPACT TROPHY
WATCH LIST
LEONARD CB
MOORE
NO. 2 CORNERBACK
Sophomore cornerback Leonard Moore has been named to the 2025 Lott IMPACT Trophy Watch List, an award recognizing college football's best defensive player in character and performance.

FALLS

Continued from page B1

hit off him. He had a real nice year, emerging early as our No. 1 pitcher and he earned All-Conference for us. He made a big jump from last year when we used him mainly as a reliever. He's a competitor and finds a way to get himself our of jams," Schreiber said.

Braden Gillesby was charged with the loss for Dowagiac in relief of Wimberley.

Berrien Springs' Ferry was credited with the victory in relief of Ethan McCrary. McCrary tossed the first five innings allowing five hits with six strikeouts. Ferry gave up just two hits and had one strikeout.

> "Most of our seniors have been with us for three years. They are three-sport athletes and they know how to compete. This was an athletic and fun group to coach. The future is bright with us returning half of our roster next season."
>
> **— Coach Keith Schreiber**

The game boiled down to too many missed opportunities for Dowagiac.

The Chieftains had the bases loaded in the top of the fourth inning with no outs and came up empty on the scoreboard.

Dowagiac stranded a total of nine baserunners on the day.

"That was the story of the game today. We had opportunities with guys on base and couldn't bring them around to score," Schreiber said.

Other bright spots on the season included freshman infielder Aiden Voorhees occupied the No. 3 spot in Dowagiac's batting order.

"We knew coming into the season that Aiden could play varsity baseball, we just weren't sure how big of a role he'd play. He stepped up right away," Schreiber noted.

Also playing big roles throughout the season were Freeman, a sophomore, at catcher, along with starting sophomore centerfielder Riley McCaffery.

"Riley was a very good defensive player for us in the outfield," Schreiber said.

The game was the final one in the careers of Dowagiac's six seniors Chase Frazier, Kaleb Smith, Williams, Gillesby, Hayden Groth and Tyler Hannapel.

"Most of our seniors have been with us for three years. They are three-sport athletes and they know how to compete. This was an athletic and fun group to coach," Schreiber said. "The future is bright with us returning half of our roster next season."

Division 2 Baseball Districts

(at Dowagiac)

Dowagiac 010 001 0 - 2 7 3

Berrien Springs 020 000 1 - 3 5 1

Matt Ferry (W); Gillesby (LP)

Dowagiac hits: Wimberley 2, McCaffery 2, Groth, Williams, Smith.

COACH

Continued from page B1

Lakes District Tournament, a district championship, and a trip to the national tournament in Missouri. We all wish Coach the best in his personal and professional future and look forward to watching his career growth."

Jenkins and Davis spoke late Tuesday with the current members of the team and new recruits to explain the situation and assure them of SMC's firm commitment to finding a quality coach as soon as possible to lead the program.

In Jenkins' first season as coach and the program's second year back in intercollegiate competition after a 26-year hiatus, the 2023-2024 squad won the MCCAA Western Conference. The team then won the Great Lakes District B Tournament, earning a berth at the NJCAA National Championship in Joplin, Missouri, where they went 1-1, finishing the season at 27-5.

The 2024-2025 season ended in the District Semifinals with a 21-10 overall record. The Roadrunners were 9-5 in the Western Conference and fiercely defended home court, going 13-2 in the 1st Source Bank Fieldhouse. SMC set numerous school records along the way, including Team 2PT FG Made – Game (42), Team 3PT % - Game (61.5%), Team FT Made – Game (27), Team FT % - Game (27-30, 90.0%), Team Blocks – Game (6), Team Steals – Game (35) and Team Steals – Season (450).

TRACK

Continued from page B1

while Georgia Babcock finished eighth in the 1,600-meters with a time of 5:24.89. She also placed eighth in the 3,200-meter run with a time of 11:43.76.

The 800-meter relay team of Annika VanBuren, Cassidy Frentz, Caliana Manfred and Kennedy Goorhouse placed eighth with a time of 1:51.95 and the 1,600-meter relay team of Babcock, Manfred, Frentz and Goorhouse finished eighth in 4:18.68.

Freshman Sarina Mora placed ninth in the 100-meter hurdles with a time of 17.14

MITCA D2 TRACK CHAMPIONSHIPS

At Berrien Springs

Girls team results

Holland Christian 1,531, Gladwin 1,404.5, Stevensville Lakeshore 1,367, BC Harper Creek 1226.5, Frankenmuth 1,218, Freeland 1195.5, Clare 1,176, Shepherd 1,090, Berrien Springs 1,024, Cadillac, 960.5, St. Joseph 914.5, Spring Lake 911, Charlotte 757, Edwardsburg 746, Parma Western 466.5

Boys team results

BC Harper Creek 1393, Parma Western, 1359, Hamilton 1056.5, Frankenmuth 951.5, Three Rivers 929.5, Berrien Springs 915.5, Alma 905, Shepherd 882.5, Saginaw Swan Valley 833.5, Holland Christian 820.5, St. Joseph 742, Stevensville Lakeshore 672, Clare 670.5

Buchanan revives tree planting tradition

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

COMMUNITY REPORT

BUCHANAN — Buchanan High School has announced the planting of new white pine trees at the front of the school, restoring a treasured part of its landscape and legacy.

Thanks to generous contributions from The Soales Family, Buckteens, Buchanan Tree Friends, Buchanan-Galien Lions Club, and the Michigan Gateway Community Foundation, the area once known as "The Pines" now welcomes new life.

This spring, strong winds brought down many of the remaining original pine trees, some of which had stood for generations. The trees planted Monday, May 19 honor that deep-rooted history while looking forward to the future.

Pine trees have been a part of Buchanan High School since its earliest days. Historic photos of the original 1871 school show pines lining the northeast and northwest corners. A 1936 student written article in The Microphone, recounts how the Honorable L.P. Alexander, then Supervisor of Buchanan, planted pine trees with his brother, Eric.

When the current high school was built in 1922, many of those 19th-century pines had to be removed. Still, a number of them remained, joined by newly planted trees that lined the walkways and inspired the name of the school's yearbook, The Pines, first published that same year. That tradition continues to this day, with students annually capturing their memories under the same enduring name.

Twelve years later, in 1934, the school mascot – the BUCKS – was adopted, inspired by the deer frequently seen from classroom windows. That wildlife heritage evolved into what is now known as "The Woods," the spirited home of the BHS Herd and our vibrant Battle of the Fans tradition.

In 2022, three new pines were planted in celebration of the school's centennial. Donated by the Dougherty family in memory of their father, Dick Dougherty—who served as a teacher, coach, principal and superintendent – those trees stood as a living tribute to his lasting impact.

Though nature has taken its toll, Buchanan High School continues to honor its past while planting seeds for the future. The new pines will once again greet generations of students, families, and visitors, carrying forward a tradition more than 150 years in the making.

Edwardsburg approves Gunn Park Pavilion rental fees

By JUSTIN FLAGEL
Leader Publications Contributor

EDWARDSBURG — The Edwardsburg Village Council welcomed residents for two public hearings, as well as their regular monthly board meeting last week.

Both hearings were part of annual requirements giving constituents the chance to comment prior to final action being taken. The first hearing was about added assessments added to tax bills to pay for delinquent fees while the second was the legally required Public Hearing on Truth in Taxation, which allows the village to avoid the Headlee Rollbacks and maintain the same millage rates as in the past. There were no commenters for the hearings. Both items were approved later in the meeting.

After several months of discussion, the council approved rental fees for the Gunn Park Pavilion at a rate of $50 with an additional $50 security deposit to assure the space is cleaned and left without damage after use. Going forward, new renters are required to sign a rental contract and pay to reserve the pavilion, though the shelter otherwise remains open and available for use for free without a guarantee of availability. All users are required to abide by park rules, including the closing time of 10 p.m. Trustees noted that the fees are not intended as a revenue stream, but to help assure proper care is taken while using the park

Department of Public Works Coordinator Richard Low provided an update on clean-up following severe storm damage in the cemetery and around the village. The cemetery is open again, with tree clean-up and most ground work complete. Various headstones are still in need of repair and a compromised grave is still being restored, pending permitting. That work is being done in conjunction with Paul E. Mayhew Funeral Home and Brutsche Concrete Products, who have donated a casket and vault, respectively. Tree clean-up in the cemetery by Kachur Tree Service came at a cost of $43,800.

Low also noted that road patching in the village would begin soon and that the department was working on a schedule for flushing the new water system. He also presented a dedication plaque for the iron filtration plant that is now functioning after an extended build and permit process.

A new entry door for the water tower building was approved for an amount not to exceed $500 after being damaged during the storms. The council also approved the purchase of a $9800 automated water testing system, intended to minimize staff time and human error for required collecting and reporting of regulatory information.

The Library Board reported that the new building was projected to be complete by December of this year and that work on sidewalks for the building would begin within a few weeks.

No action was taken after a long discussion about installing a fishing pier in the park. Trustees chose to review the state of village funds in the wake of the storm damage and possibly seek donations for the potential expense of $50,000 for the pier. If the project moves forward, it would be unable to begin until after July due to the fish spawning season and would take about a month for installation.

Speed bumps will be returning to Washington Boulevard after a discussion balancing safety concerns and the desires of residents in the area. There will be two speed bumps installed, as was the case last year, with one being moved closer to the park.

Edwardsburg is researching requirements to begin work on a new village charter. Staff and officials are still researching requirements for the process, which will include the formation of a charter commission. The body will be made up of five commissioners who will be elected in November and then work on language for ballot approval the following year. Any village resident will be able to collect signatures to place them on the ballot as a potential commissioner.

Village offices will be closed Monday, May 26th for Memorial Day. The next village council meeting will take place on Monday, June 16th at 6 p.m.

Edwardsburg school board discusses 2024-25 school year

By JUSTIN FLAGEL
Leader Publications Contributor

EDWARDSBURG — The Edwardsburg School Board met to discuss the closing school year and to look ahead to the future at their regular monthly meeting on Monday.

High school principal Ryan Markel recognized the several top achievers from the 2025 graduating class, including Valedictorians Mason Baldwin, Julia Lewis and Madelyn Pobuda and Salutatorian Kaylee Seabolt.

Girls tennis coach and math teacher Kim Bartz was recognized for her achievements in coaching, including winning the award for 2025 Wolverine Conference Coach of the Year. This is the third time Bartz has received the recognition. She also led the girl's tennis team to their first Wolverine Conference Championship this year and was noted for her leadership and impact on students on and off the tennis court.

Art teacher Julie McLellan gave a presentation about her achievements with students during the school year, emphasizing both work students did as artists and their studies on the relevance of art in the world and everyday life. She noted how classes worked in conjunction with other skills, such as writing through the formation of artist statements, math through studies of form, perspective, and patterns, and exploring the ways art ties into many regular career paths. She emphasized the value of art education to problem solving, observation, and the understanding of history.

The school board approved the adoption of Heritage Southwest Intermediate School District's 2025-2026 general fund budget after a presentation by HSISD Superintendent Andrew Hubbard. State law requires the ISD to present the budget to all school districts within the county for approval prior to taking it to the ISD board of education. Hubbard noted the upcoming goal of building a Career Technical Education facility that would host eight programs, based on needs found in a labor analysis for Cass and surrounding counties. The board also voted to send Vice President Natalie Frentz to the HSISD as their representative, with Trustee Nick Yoder acting as the alternate.

The board approved the hiring of Riley Norton for the social studies department at Edwardsburg Middle School.

Superintendent Dr. Courtney Szucs updated the board on the bond projects throughout the district, including presenting proposals from contractors for a pick up and drop off drive loop at the intermediate and primary schools. The board approved a bid by The Skillman Corporation for the project.

Szucs also provided the latest review of the district goals for the closing school year. The superintendent highlighted efforts to increase and improve communication within the district and with the community through various meetings, sessions, and work to update the district website and related apps. She also pointed to efforts to bring in and retain staff and teachers through mentorship and recognition opportunities and collaboration with the teacher's union.

Dowagiac man gets prison time for shooting woman

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

CASSOPOLIS — A Dowagiac man who shot a woman in Cassopolis earlier this year was sentenced to three prison terms Friday in Cass County Circuit Court at the Cass County Law & Courts Building.

Barret

Johnathon Abram Barrett, 25, of Twin Shores Drive in Dowagiac, pleaded guilty to felonious assault and carrying a weapon with unlawful intent as a habitual offender and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony and was sentenced to three prison terms and $2,684 in fines and costs. He has credit for 139 days served.

Barrett was sentenced to 21 months to six years in prison on the felonious assault charge and 24 months to seven and a half years in prison on the carrying a weapon with unlawful intent charge. Those two terms are concurrent but are consecutive to the mandatory two year prison term for use of a firearm in the commission of a felony.

The incident occurred Jan. 5 at a residence on O'Keefe Street in LaGrange Township near Cassopolis. Barrett and another man, Joseph Ward, got into an altercation with a woman at the home and Barrett shot the woman twice in the neck and shoulder. Ward was sentenced last month to 365 days in jail.

Cass County Assistant Prosecutor Jason Ronning reported that Barrett was arraigned Thursday in Cass County District Court in criminal sexual conduct and accosting children for immoral purposes charges and also has a pending criminal sexual conduct case in Berrien County.

"I remember the investigation in this case and the thing that sticks out to me is that there is absolutely nothing mitigating or redeeming about the defendant in this case," Ronning said. "He was inches away from shooting the woman in the face."

"He has an appalling and shocking record the last five years," Ronning added. "There have been controlled substance abuse and sex offender registry violations. Here he was shooting the woman because she wouldn't keep quiet and then hiding the firearm … This woman was inches away from having her head blown off with a shotgun."

Barrett's defense attorney disagreed. He said there were a number of mitigating factors, including the abuse Barrett suffered as a child and the fact this was an accident. "Yes, it's a terrible case, it was absolutely reckless that he used a gun to scare her," he said. "Shooting somebody was an accident."

"He didn't mean to shoot the victim," he added. "I agree that she could have bled out if his aim had been a little different and a different cartridge was used, but it wasn't an intentional shooting, it was an accident. This was the first assaultive crime on his record."

"I would just like to apologize to the victim," Barrett said. "This was a complete accident, I didn't mean for it to go this far."

Cass County Circuit Court Judge Mark Herman noted that Barrett could have been facing life in prison if he had used a different shell and his aim was a few inches one way or another.

"You denied you were there," Judge Herman said. "There were some allegations that this was an accident but stashing the gun and then hiding leads me to believe it wasn't an accident. If it was an accident, I would think that you would stay at the scene and wouldn't leave, stash your weapon and deny you were there."

The judge pointed out that everyone involved in the incident had been using methamphetamine. "You'd been using meth daily for the three years prior," he said. "I think meth played a big role in the incident in why she was acting erratically, why you were acting erratically and why the other person handed you a gun to get her to quiet down."

Zachary Paul-Cyril Smith, 39, pleaded guilty to receiving, concealing or possession of a stolen vehicle and stealing or retaining a financial transaction device-both as a habitual offender-and was sentenced to concurrent terms of 28 months to 90 months and 28 months to 72 months in prison. He must pay $2,116 in fines and costs.

Smith

The incident occurred Oct. 5, 2024 when police stopped the vehicle he was a passenger in in Porter Township. The driver was arrested for meth possession and police discovered Smith's involvement with the theft of a car and a credit card belonging to the car's owner.

Judge Herman noted Smith's prior record including jail and prison terms as well as numerous times he absconded from parole and from probation programs. "You've spent nearly all your adult life under supervision and there's been a total lack of non-compliance," he said. "I couldn't even remotely consider a treatment court program for you."

The judge's statements came after defense attorney Greg Feldman had requested an adjournment of the sentencing so Smith could be assessed for a specialty court treatment program.

"It's incredible that you've sat here and told the court countless times that you need help and want me to send you to treatment," Judge Herman said. "You have had 12 years. If you want to do it, absconding is not the way to do it."

"This is the worst record I've seen of absconding," he added. "You need to do time in prison, get engaged in services and not abscond when you get out on parole. Otherwise, you can expect to go back to prison if I see you again. Countless, countless courts have given you that opportunity."

In other sentencings:

• Lindsey Brooke Lay, 33, of Dowagiac, pleaded guilty to possession of meth and was sentenced to 18 months probation, credit for two days served and $2,148 in fines and costs. She can keep the charge off her record if she's successful on probation. The incident occurred Jan. 11 in Dowagiac.

Lay

• Noah Landon Wells, 20, now of Bristol, Tenn., pleaded guilty to assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than murder and domestic violence and was sentenced to three years probation under the Holmes Youthful Training Act, credit for four days served and $2,888 in fines and costs. He can keep the charges off his record if he is successful on probation. The incident occurred Jan. 26 in Jones.

Wells

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Miscellaneous For Sale

For sale, a refurbished mid-2019 Apple Macbook Pro with .4 GHz Intel Core i5 (13.3 inch, 8GB RAM, 256GB SSD) Space Gray (Renewed)
Brand Apple
Model Name MV962LL/A
Screen Size 13.3 Inches
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CPU Model Core i5
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Asking $500. It is still in the box.

Also for sale, a RIF6 adjustable height standing desk converter — 32-inch wide laptop riser or dual monitor workstation. Easily sit or stand with gas spring lift. Still in the box. Asking $75. Will sell in combo with the computer or separately.

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Public Notices

Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

MON JUNE 30 NOON
Abandoned Vehicle Auction

Auction Location
Millin Towing of
611 Wayne St Niles MI
Register at 11:45am
CASH ONLY

1999 SUBARU FORESTER WHITE
JF1SF6350XH723317

2002 HYUNDAI ELANTRA MAROON
KMHDN45DX2U256756

2005 CADILLAC CTS BEIGE
1G6DP567250128541

2007 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE MAROON
1J8GR48K97C575393

2007 LINCOLN MKZ PURPLE
3LNHM28T97R600071

2008 CADILLAC CTS BURGUNDY
1G6DH577280208776

2009 FORD F-150 BLUE
1FTRX14829FA65435

2010 FORD FUSION SILVER
3FAHP0JG6AR177699

2011 DODGE JOURNEY RED
3D4PH6FG4BT551927

2012 HYUNDAI SONATA GRAY
5NPEC4AB5CH330552

2014 FORD FUSION WHITE
3FA6P0HD0ER161586

2014 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE GREEN
1C4PJMCSXEW260538

2016 FORD EDGE WHITE
2FMPK4K99GBC03808

Abandoned Vehicles sold as is with no guarantee! No knowledge about condition. All vehicles must be paid for and removed on the day of auction. Listing subject to change depending upon Secretary of State documentation and redemption. Millin Towing reserves the right to bid.

Niles Daily Star:
May 31, 2025
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PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF SELF STORAGE SALE

Please take notice Just Simple Storage - Menominee located at N710 County Rd 577, Menominee, MI, 49858 intends to hold an Auction of storage units in default of payment. The sale will occur as an Online auction via www.storagetreasures.com on 6/19/2025 at 12:00 PM. Unless stated otherwise the description of the contents are household goods, furnishings and garage essentials. Unit #32. This sale may be withdrawn at any time without notice.

Niles Daily Star:
May 31 and June 7, 2025
SALE 6.19.25

PUBLIC NOTICE

SYNOPSIS OF THE MINUTES OF THE ONTWA TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MONDAY MAY 12, 2025

The regular meeting of the Ontwa Township Board of Trustees was called to order at 6:00pm. Supervisor Christensen, Clerk VanBelle, Treasurer Leist, Trustees Stutsman, Bolock, Kozinski and Marchetti were present.
Call to Order
Pledge of Allegiance
Approval of the Agenda
Public comment
Approval of Consent Agenda
Commissioner Reports
Committee Board Reports: No reports this month
Old Business: Elkhart Road Project
New Business: Gutter Repair, Splitting of Plotted Lots Resolution
Schedule of township meetings: Board of Trustees June 9th, Ambulance Board June 11th, Police Board June 12th , Wastewater Board May 28th .
The township will be closed May 26th for Memorial Day.
Meeting Adjourned 6:26pm.
Minutes of Board of Trustee meetings may be found on the Township website: www.ontwatwp.org
Respectfully submitted by Tina VanBelle, Ontwa Township Clerk
Approved for Publication by Supervisor Meryl Christensen

Niles Daily Star:
May 31, 2025
SYNOPSIS 05.12.25

PUBLIC NOTICE

Howard Township
Cass County, Michigan
Board of Trustees
May 20, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Township Hall.

Board Action
Approved Meeting Agenda.
Approved the minutes of the 04/15/25 Board Meeting
Approved the financial report with an ending balance of 1,846,173.82 including a CD
Approved the payment of bills through May 20, 2025
Approved the departmental reports
Approved Simmons Tree Service Contract for clean up.
Approved Firework permit for Scott Carli
Approved Contract for Tyler Tech for GL and AP services
Public Comment Public comment occurred
Adjourn the meeting at 7:29pm

Niles Daily Star: May 31, 2025
SYNOPSIS 5.20.25

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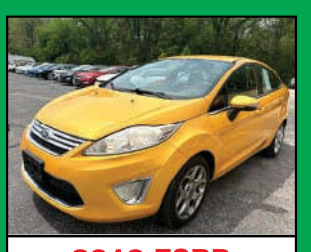

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Diesel. 35 miles per gallon

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